

CHAPTER 3

HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

**HOUSEHOLD
MAINTENANCE**

Navy policy calls for a continuing program of cost reduction in the maintenance of housing. It is equally important that the value of the Navy's investment in family quarters not diminish because of poor maintenance. That is where you come in. Housing Office personnel are dedicated to providing clean, livable quarters for you and your family. We will strive to assign you a unit in "shipshape" condition – but we need your help.

In order to give you a good, clean unit, we need to receive the unit in that condition from the family before you. Likewise, we expect to receive the quarters back in that same condition when you leave, ordinary wear and tear excepted. You are responsible for the quarters and equipment assigned to you. **TREAT YOUR MILITARY FAMILY HOUSING AS IF YOU OWNED IT.**

While you are in quarters you are responsible for minor maintenance and repair, which means housekeeping, maintenance and care of grounds, and reporting items which require maintenance and repair.

In addition, you are responsible for the acts of your family members, guests, and animals. It is your responsibility to make certain any loss or damage caused by abuse or negligence is corrected or the government is reimbursed. For instance, if the child next door throws a rock and breaks your window, you are responsible for replacing the window or paying for it. Even though it wasn't your child, it is your window. The child's parents should be responsible to you, but you are responsible to the government. If a rock hits a window while you are mowing the lawn or you damage a door while trying to open or close it, again, you are responsible. This would be the case if you lived in a civilian rental property. Renter's insurance will sometimes pay a portion of repairs.

Improper care or malicious damage to your quarters may be reason for eviction from government quarters. **IN ADDITION, YOU WILL BE HELD LIABLE FOR DAMAGES AND CLEANING.**

Your prudent care will be appreciated by the many families who will occupy the quarters after you have moved on to your next assignment.

**GROUND
MAINTENANCE**

Yard work, by its very nature, must be shared by residents and the Navy. Some tasks have to be performed by skilled personnel with special equipment, while others are best done by the resident. In some neighborhoods, much of the grounds keeping is accomplished by a contractor. Refer to the appendixes in the back of this book or check with your Housing Office personnel for grounds maintenance responsibilities in your neighborhood.

In housing areas where grounds maintenance is the responsibility of the resident, mowing, watering, edging, hedge and tree trimming (up to the six foot level), and caring of flower beds are up to you. Be sure to wear protective equipment as needed.

Tasks such as trimming large trees, fertilizing, and similar functions are best performed by the Navy. Low growing trees and shrubs, less than six feet tall, are to be trimmed by the resident.

**GROUND
MAINTENANCE**
(Continued)

In some neighborhoods, residents are responsible for the grounds up to fifty feet from the unit. Residents are responsible for keeping cracks in sidewalks free from grass and weeds. Trimming the grass around trees, fire hydrants, poles, or other objects in the yard is also the responsibility of the resident. Grounds are to be raked as often as necessary to keep the area free of fallen leaves and litter. Lawn tools and gardening equipment are available from the Self-Help Store.

The grounds immediately adjacent to your quarters are considered private yards, and the residents are entitled to the same privacy afforded in any civilian community. Public areas such as community sidewalks, streets, and parking areas should not be used as play areas.

Please see appendixes for further information.

HOUSEHOLD REPAIRS

You are encouraged to make minor household repairs which do not require a skilled repair person, such as replacing faucet washers, clearing minor plumbing stoppages, replacing door stops, and tightening loose screws. Residents are not permitted to perform any type of electrical repairs or alterations.

ALTERATIONS

All alterations to quarters must be requested in writing. Approval from the Housing Director must be granted in writing prior to starting the work or purchasing materials and restored to original condition upon vacating. Information on some alterations is provided below:

Air conditioning	Prior authorization required. Approved for medical purposes only. It must clearly state that it is a medical requirement not a recommendation. Submit a letter and a doctor's recommendation to the Housing Office.
Storage sheds	Prior authorization required.
Patio awnings/covers	Not authorized.
Television antennas	Not authorized.
Ceiling fans	Not authorized/residents will not remove government installed fans where provided.
Painting/stenciling	Prior authorization required.
Wallpapering	Not authorized.
Child safety gates	Authorized inside quarters. Prohibited on exterior stairways such as on apartment building porches.
*Satellite dishes	Prior authorization required.

*Please see appendixes for further information.

SELF-HELP STORE

The Self-Help Program was established to assist family housing residents in the care of their quarters and yards. While specific inventories may vary from base to base, our area Self-Help Stores provide lawn maintenance equipment, gardening tools, floor buffers, and carpet steam cleaners/shampoos.

As a user of the Self-Help Stores, you agree to the following:

- Return all borrowed equipment ON TIME and in good, clean condition. Residents abusing time limits may have their Self-Help privileges revoked.
- Do not loan your Self-Help cards or borrowed equipment to others. Items are loaned for personal use at your quarters only. You are entirely responsible for damaged, lost, or unreturned items.
- Failure to comply with Self-Help Store rules may result in loss of Self-Help privileges.

Please refer to the appropriate appendix for further information.

**MAINTENANCE AND
REPAIR CONTRACTS
SERVICES**

Quarters are made available to new residents as soon as possible after the previous residents have vacated. Generally, all necessary repairs will have been made before you move in. However, Service Desk personnel will provide timely assistance and service for all repairs and maintenance items. When making calls to the Service Desk, give your name, address, telephone number, and a brief description of the trouble. If your trouble is an emergency, such as a power failure, short circuit, broken water line, etc., the contracted maintenance personnel will respond within an hour. Please make sure you will be home at that time.

For tracking purposes, when requesting service work, please write the work authorization number on your calendar on the date you call it in.

Maintenance and Repair Contract Services employees do not have pass keys and cannot enter your residence for any purpose during your absence without your consent, except in emergencies involving possible loss of life or damage to property. In such a rare case, the contractor will be escorted by a Housing representative. Every effort will be made to contact you, and a notice will be left by the Housing representative advising you of the entry.

UTILITIES

Utilities provided by the government to your housing unit include water, gas, electricity, and waste disposal. It is vitally important that you do not abuse the utilities provided. Such waste will mean a substantial loss of funds that could be used for other purposes in our housing areas. Treat these resources as if you were paying for them.

**ENERGY
CONSERVATION**

Upon assignment to quarters all residents agree to comply with energy and water conservation policies. Use the common sense approach by turning off lights when no one is in the room and turning off the stereo or television when you leave the house. Exterior lights are to be turned off during daylight hours.

When watering your lawn, do not let water overflow and run down sidewalks or into the street. Adjust sprinklers to prevent overspray. Call the Service Desk for maintenance such as broken water lines or gushing water. The washing of automobiles in driveways is permitted; however, you must use a hose with an automatic shut off nozzle. Do not wash vehicles on the lawn.

**CHRISTMAS/HOLIDAY
LIGHTING AND
DECORATIONS**

Holiday lighting is authorized from Thanksgiving Day until the second weekend in January between the hours of 1700 and 2200 (San Diego residents please see appendix). Lighting should not be left on when no one is home. Lights and decorations must be attached to quarters without causing damage. Gutter clips are the preferred means of hanging lighting. Roof decorations and lighting above the first floor roofline are not permitted. If such decorations are discovered, the resident will be required to immediately remove them. Residents will be held financially responsible for any damages to the roof. Canned "snow" must not be sprayed on siding or brick facades.

TRASH COLLECTION

You were provided a trash pickup schedule when you checked into quarters and will be notified of any changes. Your trash cans must be at the curb before 0700 on the scheduled pick-up days and must be returned to proper storage by the end of pick-up day. If you assign children the task of carrying out the trash, please make sure that the job is done properly. Ensure that small children do not play around the trash containers, as this sometimes results in the contents being strewn around the neighborhood. When not out for collection, the cans must be properly stored. The size and amount of trash which can be placed at the curb for pick-up varies with each trash collection contract. You may find that information in the back of this handbook in your housing area's appendix. You may also refer to the appendix for information about dumpsters which are provided in some areas.

Using plastic trash bags, keeping trash containers covered, and routinely washing trash containers and recycling bins with soap and water will minimize odor and pest control problems.

Please see appendixes for further information.

TRASH RECYCLING

Trash recycling is strongly encouraged, and in some areas mandatory, for Military Family Housing residents. Information regarding recycling in your area was provided to you at your check-in inspection, and further information may be found in your area's appendix in the back of this handbook.

Recycling containers must be properly stored with your trash cans.

TELEVISION SERVICE
(Cable television and satellite dishes)

Please read the appendix for your housing area for information.

PLUMBING

Occasionally, there is a problem with stopped up sewer and plumbing lines. You are asked to see that objects such as diapers, toys, feminine hygiene products, etc., are not flushed down the toilet. Keeping the lid closed will help. Charges may be assessed for the removal of such objects. If a toilet overflows, turn the water off at the valve below the flush tank, then try using a plunger. If you don't have a plunger, you may borrow one from your Self-Help Store. If you cannot clear the line, call your Service Desk. If the trouble occurs during non-working hours and you have a second bathroom, please wait until normal working hours to report the problem.

ELECTRICAL

Electric wiring in garage spaces or any other area in Family Housing units are not to be modified, repaired or added by residents. Overloading of circuits and overuse of extension cords must be avoided.

HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

Residents are NOT to perform any type of maintenance or repairs on government provided appliances. Damages caused by such repairs will be charged to the resident. If government provided appliances do not work properly contact the Service Desk.

Personally Owned Range and Refrigerator

Residents may use their own appliances (except gas ranges). Government appliances may be moved by the resident and stored in the garage or other part of the unit; however, government appliances must not and will not be removed from the quarters. Residents must return government provided appliances to their original location prior to vacating quarters and are responsible for cleaning and any damage.

Refrigerator

Routine cleaning of your refrigerator will improve efficiency and sanitation. The outside of the refrigerator should be cleaned frequently with a damp cloth and mild soap and warm water or a spray cleaner. Abrasive cleansing powders should not be used on the refrigerator. Vacuuming the coils of your refrigerator increases its efficiency and helps prevent breakdowns. Coils may be on the back or underneath behind the kickplate. Periodic cleaning of the drip pan underneath the refrigerator is recommended as a sanitation measure.

*Refrigerator
(Continued)*

Call the Service Desk if the refrigerator is not freezing properly or if any parts are broken. If you are having trouble with your refrigerator, please make these simple tests before calling the Service Desk:

- ➡ If the light is not on, check to see if the power cord is plugged in and check the bulb.
- ➡ If the plug is secure and the refrigerator still fails to operate, plug another appliance into the same outlet to check for power.
- ➡ Check the temperature control dial; it may be turned OFF.

If the refrigerator still does not operate properly, call the Service Desk. If you will be away from your quarters for less than a month, leave your refrigerator on with the temperature control at its normal position. For longer periods of absence, turn the temperature control to low. Leaving an open box of baking soda or used coffee grounds in the refrigerator will help to absorb odors. Be sure to discard perishables such as meats, milk, and produce to maintain proper sanitation while you are away from home.

Range

The proper use and care of ranges, ovens, and microwaves will not only save utilities and repairs, it will give better results in cooking and baking and may prevent serious injury or fire. Routine cleaning will make preparing for your final inspection much easier.

Here are a few pointers that may help:

- ➡ Wash drip pans frequently and wipe spilled food from the burners as soon as they have cooled.
- ➡ Burned food on the bottom of the oven or on racks can be removed with a brush or steel wool, or by soaking in water.
- ➡ Be sure to lift the stove top often and keep it free of spilled grease and food to prevent fires.
- ➡ Pull freestanding ranges out occasionally and clean the floor and surrounding walls and cabinets. Do not attempt to pull out built-in or gas appliances.

If you have a self-cleaning range, be sure to read the appliance instruction manual for proper use. If you do not have a manual, call your housing office. DO NOT use oven cleaner or leave racks in the oven during the cleaning process. You will be charged for damages. Clean the oven every month or two. The longer the charred food remains on the oven or other parts, the harder it is to remove.

Proper maintenance of your stove is important. Many maintenance problems in stoves are caused by failure to keep the burners and oven clean.

NOTE: Refrigerators and ranges which must be taken from the quarters by the maintenance contractor for repair or replacement must be cleaned by the resident prior to removal.

Garbage Disposal

These units are very handy but must be used with care, because they are easily damaged. Never put chemical drain cleaners down the disposal, as serious corrosion and damage will result. To properly operate your garbage disposal, remove the drain stopper, turn on the *cold* water, and keep it going during the entire operation to thoroughly flush the ground wastes through the drain. Start the disposal and feed food wastes directly into it. NEVER put your fingers or hand into a running disposal. Run the disposal until you no longer hear food grinding. DO NOT put bones, meat gristle, onion skins, corncobs, and other very hard or fibrous foods down your garbage disposal.

If you are having trouble with the unit, check first to determine what you recently placed in it before calling the Service Desk. This will help the repair person resolve the problem. Press the reset button on the bottom of the unit, then try the switch again. If you don't know where the reset button is, call the Service Desk and ask for instructions.

Dishwasher

Following are some suggestions for using your dishwasher:

- ➡ Before loading, rinse dishes of excess food.
- ➡ Use dishwasher detergent made only for dishwashers.
- ➡ Arrange dishes so water can run off.
- ➡ Some items which should not be washed in the dishwasher are hand painted china, Woodenware, colored aluminum or cast iron pots and pans, and plastic or rubber dishes or utensils not specifically labeled "dishwasher safe."
- ➡ Remove paper labels before washing jars or cans.

Water Heaters

DO NOT attempt to adjust temperature or any type of setting or valves on your water heater. Tampering with water heater valves can be dangerous. Leaks, breaks, or non-heating water should be reported to your Service Desk immediately. The space surrounding the water heater should never be used for storage.

While automotive repairs are not allowed in any housing area, it is vitally important that such work not take place in garages where natural gas water heaters are stored. The results could be deadly.

**WALLS, WOODWORK
AND FLOORS**

To protect walls and woodwork, we make the following suggestions:

- ➡ Beds, tables, and chairs should not touch the walls.
- ➡ Bicycles, large toys, strollers, and such items should be moved through doorways with care.
- ➡ Supply your children with blackboards or drawing pads to discourage their writing on the walls. You will be responsible for cleaning pencil and crayon marks from the walls when you vacate quarters.

For tile, hardwood, and vinyl floors, the following suggestions are offered:

- ➡ Lift heavy furniture rather than dragging across the floors to avoid marring.
- ➡ Never flood the floor with water or let water stand on the surface.
- ➡ DO NOT apply wax to no-wax floors. Your Neighborhood Manager can tell you if you have a no-wax floor. There are certain products on the market which claim to be shining agents for no-wax floors. We encourage you not to use these products, even if specifically made for no-wax floors. You may be charged for damages to the floor cause by wax, shining agents, or wax removers.

PEST CONTROL

Routine control of normal household pests, along with keeping pets free of fleas, is a resident responsibility. The use of non-residual insecticides labeled for safe application by the general public, such as household spray insecticides, is expected of the resident. Exchanges, Commissaries, and commercial stores stock an assortment of pest control products. For infestations of pests that are beyond resident capabilities and require professional control measures, call your Service Desk.

San Diego residents please call your Housing Site Office personnel.

As a general rule, poor housekeeping is the main factor in cockroach infestation. Roaches thrive on leftover food placed on sink counters and in cupboards, on unwashed dishes, and on food left out for pets. They will also feed on paper and glue products, including shelf paper.

Some things you can do to control roaches and other household pests are:

- ➡ Deposit garbage in trash cans in plastic bags.
- ➡ Wipe up spilled foods or drinks immediately.
- ➡ Do not keep empty soft drink cans or bottles under the sink, and rinse them well before placing in recycling bins.
- ➡ Keep soiled clothing in a clothes hamper or other container. Wash clothes frequently enough that clothing does not pile up all over the floor.
- ➡ Clean up immediately after pets that are not properly housebroken.
- ➡ Store leftover food in airtight containers.